The Socio-Cultural Context of Operations: Culture and Foreign Language Learning for Company-Grade Officers

Allison Abbe
Jessica A. Gallus
U.S. Army Research Institute

**U.S. Army Research Institute
for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

**Department of the Army
Deputy Chief of Staff, G1**

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**MICHELLE SAMS, Ph.D.
Director**

Technical review by

Nehama Babin, U.S. Army Research Institute
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14. ABSTRACT *(Maximum 200 words)*: The purpose of this study was to identify the socio-cultural aspects of mission performance for company-grade officers and to identify a core set of learning objectives for the pre-commissioning phase of the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC-A). To determine what officers need to be able to do with regard to the socio-cultural context of operations, data collections at several different installations were conducted about the nature, extent, and importance of officers' encounters with foreign cultures on deployment. Results informed the development of a draft cultural competency framework describing what officers do, or should do, to perform their missions effectively in an unfamiliar culture. Additional analyses based on these data collections as well as other Army doctrine resulted in updated Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy learning objectives for junior officers. Findings can be used to improve program planning for training and development initiatives, determine the extent to which the goals of the ACFLS are being met, and identify further training gaps. This research may also provide a useful method to follow in revising culture and foreign language learning objectives for other career stages and cohorts.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
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Allison Abbe
Jessica A. Gallus
U.S. Army Research Institute

Foundational Science Research Unit
Gerald F. Goodwin, Chief

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iii

iv

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF OPERATIONS: CULTURE AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR COMPANY-GRADE OFFICERS

Research Requirement:

The Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (ACFLS) specifies a set of learning outcomes to be achieved by Army officers and enlisted personnel at different career stages. These learning outcomes encompass a range of cross-cultural, regional, and linguistic knowledge, skills, and abilities. The ACFLS lists many outcomes that should be achieved during Stage 1 of an officer's career—that is, by the end of initial military training. At this stage, many learning outcomes are described as providing basic knowledge, initial familiarity, or foundational skills.

Although the ACFLS provides a comprehensive framework, the learning objectives throughout the framework could be enhanced with greater detail and more explicit links with the mission demands of different personnel at different career stages. It is unclear what level of knowledge and skill will be sufficient to meet future operational demands. For example, what constitutes a basic or foundational level of cultural knowledge and skill for new officers? This research had two goals: to identify the socio-cultural aspects of mission performance for company-grade officers and to identify a core set of learning objectives for the pre-commissioning phase of the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC-A).

Procedure:

The research goals addressed the following two questions: (1) What do officers need to be able to *do* with regard to the socio-cultural context of operations, and (2) What do officers need to *learn* to support mission performance in that context? To address the *doing* question, data collections at several different installations were conducted about the nature, extent, and importance of officers' encounters with foreign cultures when on deployment. Seventy-two company-grade officers sampled from ten branches completed questionnaires and participated in focus group discussions. Their responses informed the development of a draft cultural competency framework describing what officers do, or should do, to perform their missions effectively in an unfamiliar culture.

The competency framework then served as a set of target performance capabilities that culture and foreign language training and/or education should aim to provide or enhance. To address the *learning* question, we revised the ACFLS learning objectives based on the data we obtained from officers, the competency framework, and Army documents such as the Initial Military Training Warrior Task and Battle Drill list.

Findings:

Interactions with host nation civilians and host nation military personnel were the most common intercultural encounters on deployment. Interactions with host nation government personnel and with host nation or third country contractors occurred rarely to occasionally. Interactions with non-government organizations were rare. Across all five types of groups, the

most common intercultural encounters on deployment were informal discussion or information exchange, analyzing the intent or behavior of individuals or groups, and building rapport. Other common encounters were building relationships, interpreting events from the perspective of others, and developing short-term plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. individuals or groups.

Participants also rated behaviors and activities that potentially support mission performance in a socio-cultural context. All 53 items received mean ratings above 3 (*Some importance*), and 20 items received mean ratings of 4 (*Important*) or higher. The top-rated items included aspects of leadership, such as maintaining awareness of and conveying commander's intent, and interpersonal interactions, including working with interpreters, establishing rapport, and building relationships. Top-rated items also included understanding and anticipating the impact of the unit's actions on the local population.

Although the ACFLS career components generally aligned well with the competency areas identified in our questionnaire and focus group findings, the learning objectives needed revision to better reflect the needs of company-grade officers. We revised the objectives in several ways. First, we added verbs to make the learning objectives more concrete and more readily incorporated into curriculum and instructional planning and design. We also added some skills that were missing from the original list of learning objectives that emerged in our research and in reviews of other documents. We also consolidated some objectives and expanded others to better reflect the relative emphasis that officers in our data collections placed on the different learning domains.

Utilization and Dissemination of Findings:

The learning objectives proposed in this report are a somewhat smaller, more concrete set of objectives for Officer Career Stage 1 than those that were initially proposed in the ACFLS. These objectives are aligned with competencies found to support mission performance in company-grade officers. Adopting the learning objectives would allow for improved program planning for training and development initiatives. In addition, the competencies can support the development of assessment metrics for evaluating the impact of training and education initiatives, determining the extent to which the goals of the ACFLS are being met, and identifying any further training gaps. This research may also provide a useful method to follow in revising culture and foreign language learning objectives for other career stages and cohorts.

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF OPERATIONS: CULTURE AND FOREIGN
LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR COMPANY-GRADE OFFICERS

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CONTENTS (continued)

LIST OF FIGURES

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF OPERATIONS: CULTURE AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR COMPANY-GRADE OFFICERS

The nature of Army operations in recent years and the types of cultures in which they have occurred have prompted a revival of interest in the socio-cultural context of operations. Conducting counter-insurgency and stability, security, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR) operations in countries perceived to be very culturally distant from the U.S. has presented challenges for training and leader development. Anticipating which cultures and languages will be relevant in future operations and incorporating socio-cultural skill sets without taking time and resources from Soldiers' primary technical skills are among those challenges. Because culture, region, and language constitute the *context* for Army operations rather than the tasks or missions themselves, the general-purpose force cannot focus on these at the expense of their primary functions. The current research was conducted to obtain a clearer understanding of what socio-cultural capabilities are needed to perform effectively as a company-grade officer in the general-purpose force.

Determining what officers need to *do* in performing their missions is a critical step before determining what they should *learn* at various points in their training and education. In support of the *doing* portion of this problem, the first goal of this research was to identify the socio-cultural aspects of mission performance for company-grade officers. Data collections at several different installations were informative about the nature, extent, and importance of officers' encounters with foreign cultures on deployment. These findings informed the development of a draft cultural competency framework describing what officers do, or should do, to perform effectively in an unfamiliar culture.

The competency framework then served as a set of target performance capabilities that culture and foreign language training and/or education should aim to provide or enhance. To address the *learning* portion of the capabilities problem, the second goal of this research was to identify a core set of learning objectives for the pre-commissioning phase of the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC-A). This report provides learning objectives representing a refinement of the set outlined in the Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (ACFLS; Department of the Army, 2009). The ACFLS outlined a set of learning objectives for career development in all culture components by cohort (officer, warrant officer, and enlisted/non-commissioned officer). The learning objectives were organized in a career development framework, identifying objectives for four stages: (1) recruitment through initial military training (IMT), (2) end of IMT through the 7th year, (3) 8th through 16th year, and (4) 17th year and beyond.

Although the ACFLS provided a comprehensive framework, the learning objectives throughout the framework could be enhanced with the addition of greater detail and more explicit links with the mission demands of different personnel at different career stages. The learning objectives proposed in this report are a somewhat smaller, more concrete set of objectives for officers' career Stage 1 (recruitment through IMT), which are aligned with competencies found to support mission performance in company-grade officers.

An Empirical Investigation of Deployment Experiences

Method

      Participants. Participants were 72 company-grade officers (24 LTs, 48 CPTs; 62 male, 10 female) with a mean age of 28.65 years (*SD* = 4.37). All reported having completed one previous deployment, of which 22 reported two previous deployments and 10 reported three. Of the deployments reported, the majority were to Iraq (N = 62); only a few were to other countries (Afghanistan, N = 7; Haiti, N = 1; Southeast Asia, N = 1; and Middle Eastern countries other than Iraq, N = 3).

      Participants included combat, combat support, and combat service support roles (listed in Table 1). Although obtaining a representative sample of branches was not possible, we attempted to include a range of different branches and roles. Most participants reported having served as a platoon leader during deployment; some had also served as company executive officers or company commanders. Approximately half of the participants reported Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) as their commissioning source; the others were primarily from Officer Candidate School (OCS), and a few were U.S. Military Academy (USMA) graduates.

Table 1
Participant Branches

	N
Armor	8
Field Artillery	11
Infantry	5
Engineer	5
Military Police	11
Medical Services	5
Chemical	2
Ordnance	10
Quartermaster	8
Transportation	7

      Materials. Participants responded to demographic questions that included their age, gender, branch, and deployment experiences. Next, participants provided ratings of the frequency and importance of fourteen different types of intercultural encounters on deployment (see Appendix). Some of the questionnaire items were adapted from a questionnaire developed for another project (McCloskey, Grandjean, Behymer, & Ross, 2010). Other items were based on Soldiers' experiences as reported in interviews for other research projects, in blogs and online discussion groups, and in informal conversations. Examples include: "I had informal discussions or exchanged information," and "I had arguments or other conflicts with non-U.S. individuals or groups." Frequency ratings were on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Daily or Almost Daily*). Importance ratings were on a 6-point scale, including 0 (*Not applicable/No interaction*)

and ranging from 1 (*Not at all important*) to 5 (*Absolutely essential*). Participants were asked to rate all 14 types of encounters in relation to five encounter groups: host nation civilians, foreign militaries, host nation government, foreign contractors, and non-government organizations. A composite for each of the five encounter groups was generated by taking the mean rating of the fourteen items. This composite was calculated for both frequency and importance. A total composite was also calculated by multiplying the mean frequency rating and mean importance rating for each of the five encounter groups.

Following the first data collection, participants responded to a 53-item behavior questionnaire that was generated after the initial round of data collection to ensure that the items captured the range of activities performed by officers across different branches. Whereas the 14-item intercultural encounters questions described above focused on whom the officers interacted with on various types of tasks, the 53 additional statements focused on actions that the officers might take as a function of those intercultural encounters. Specifically, the statements describe activities or behaviors related to the socio-cultural component of mission performance. Participants rated the importance of each of the 53 behaviors to accomplishing their missions (1 = *Not at all important* to 5 = *Absolutely essential*). Examples include: "Manage interpersonal and intergroup conflict," and "Recognize when using own cultural lens and biases." The sample size for this portion of the questionnaire was 57.

Procedure. Participants completed the questionnaire first and then participated in a focus group discussion about their roles and responsibilities during deployment, their intercultural encounters and challenges, and their cultural training and other preparation for deployment. One goal of the focus group discussions was to determine what might have been overlooked in the questionnaire. This is the main reason the 53-item behavior questionnaire was generated after the initial round of data collection: to make sure the items captured the range of activities performed by officers across different branches. The focus group was conducted to capture information outside the scope of the questionnaires.

Results

Mean ratings for encounter items are listed in Tables 2 through 6 with their corresponding importance ratings. Interactions with host nation civilians and host nation military personnel were the most common intercultural encounters while on deployment (see Table 7). Interactions with host nation government personnel and with host nation or third country contractors occurred rarely to occasionally. Interactions with non-government organizations were rare.

Across all five types of groups, the most common intercultural encounters on deployment were informal discussion or information exchange, analyzing the intent or behavior of individuals or groups, and building rapport. Other common encounters were building relationships, interpreting events from the perspective of others, and developing short-term plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. individuals or groups. The highest frequency encounters were given the highest importance ratings.

Table 2

Interactions with Host Nation Civilians During Deployment

Host Nation Civilians	Amount		Importance	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1. I had informal discussions or exchanged information.	3.32	1.28	3.14	1.57
2. I formally instructed or advised people on how to do something.	2.14	1.35	2.30	1.65
3. I directed or ordered people to take an action.	2.19	1.38	2.30	1.65
4. I led or supervised non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.93	1.37	1.87	1.57
5. I tried to persuade individuals or groups to do something or take a different point of view.	2.44	1.47	2.51	1.71
6. I analyzed the actions and/or intent of individuals or groups.	3.23	1.48	3.23	1.73
7. I interpreted events from the perspective of non-U.S. individuals or groups.	2.93	1.55	2.97	1.79
8. I developed short-term operational plans that impacted or considered non-U.S individuals or groups.	2.71	1.56	2.85	1.57
9. I developed procedures, protocols or long-term plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. people or groups.	2.33	1.41	2.39	1.74
10. I developed plans in collaboration with others.	2.25	1.48	2.25	1.74
11. I attempted to rapidly build rapport with other people or groups.	3.21	1.37	3.13	1.68
12. I attempted to build long-term relationships with individuals or groups.	2.69	1.54	2.61	1.62
13. I had arguments or other conflicts with non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.86	1.12	1.87	1.54
14. I experienced security threats from non-U.S. individuals or groups.	2.21	1.25	2.37	1.83

Table 3

Interactions with Foreign Military During Deployment

Foreign Military	Amount		Importance	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1. I had informal discussions or exchanged information.	3.44	1.37	3.49	1.64
2. I formally instructed or advised people on how to do something.	2.72	1.51	2.79	1.76
3. I directed or ordered people to take an action.	2.45	1.54	2.57	1.79
4. I led or supervised non-U.S. individuals or groups.	2.13	1.47	2.34	1.78
5. I tried to persuade individuals or groups to do something or take a different point of view.	2.46	1.52	2.64	1.68
6. I analyzed the actions and/or intent of individuals or groups.	2.96	1.54	3.16	1.67
7. I interpreted events from the perspective of non-U.S. individuals or groups.	2.85	1.53	3.10	1.65
8. I developed short-term operational plans that impacted or considered non-U.S individuals or groups.	2.82	1.62	3.07	1.76
9. I developed procedures, protocols or long-term plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. people or groups.	2.34	1.50	2.70	1.84
10. I developed plans in collaboration with others.	2.73	1.52	2.96	1.90
11. I attempted to rapidly build rapport with other people or groups.	3.32	1.58	3.39	1.67
12. I attempted to build long-term relationships with individuals or groups.	2.90	1.64	3.10	1.77
13. I had arguments or other conflicts with non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.79	1.13	1.99	1.66
14. I experienced security threats from non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.71	1.12	2.20	1.85

Table 4

Interactions with Host Nation Government Personnel During Deployment

Host Nation Government Personnel	Amount		Importance	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1. I had informal discussions or exchanged information.	2.42	1.42	2.40	1.71
2. I formally instructed or advised people on how to do something.	1.89	1.27	1.99	1.65
3. I directed or ordered people to take an action.	1.76	1.15	1.79	1.61
4. I led or supervised non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.58	1.07	1.61	1.49
5. I tried to persuade individuals or groups to do something or take a different point of view.	1.99	1.41	2.23	1.70
6. I analyzed the actions and/or intent of individuals or groups.	2.42	1.60	2.49	1.75
7. I interpreted events from the perspective of non-U.S. individuals or groups.	2.31	1.47	2.34	1.75
8. I developed short-term operational plans that impacted or considered non-U.S individuals or groups.	2.30	1.58	2.33	1.72
9. I developed procedures, protocols or long-term plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. people or groups.	2.01	1.39	2.06	1.68
10. I developed plans in collaboration with others.	2.15	1.38	2.01	1.72
11. I attempted to rapidly build rapport with other people or groups.	2.59	1.64	2.60	1.86
12. I attempted to build long-term relationships with individuals or groups.	2.31	1.44	2.24	1.71
13. I had arguments or other conflicts with non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.59	1.01	1.60	1.45
14. I experienced security threats from non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.50	0.91	1.61	1.58

Table 5

Interactions with Foreign Contractors During Deployment

Foreign Contractors	Amount		Importance	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1. I had informal discussions or exchanged information.	2.87	1.29	2.38	1.62
2. I formally instructed or advised people on how to do something.	2.03	1.28	1.94	1.60
3. I directed or ordered people to take an action.	2.10	1.44	2.11	1.86
4. I led or supervised non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.93	1.31	1.89	1.74
5. I tried to persuade individuals or groups to do something or take a different point of view.	1.96	1.33	1.68	1.56
6. I analyzed the actions and/or intent of individuals or groups.	2.31	1.48	2.14	1.63
7. I interpreted events from the perspective of non-U.S. individuals or groups.	2.17	1.35	2.04	1.55
8. I developed short-term operational plans that impacted or considered non-U.S individuals or groups.	2.07	1.35	2.08	1.66
9. I developed procedures, protocols or long-term plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. people or groups.	1.89	1.25	1.87	1.64
10. I developed plans in collaboration with others.	2.11	1.37	1.87	1.64
11. I attempted to rapidly build rapport with other people or groups.	2.38	1.32	2.33	1.59
12. I attempted to build long-term relationships with individuals or groups.	1.97	1.31	1.89	1.58
13. I had arguments or other conflicts with non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.53	0.86	1.41	1.27
14. I experienced security threats from non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.38	0.64	1.55	1.65

Table 6

Interactions with Non-Government Organizations During Deployment

Non-Government Organizations	Amount		Importance	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1. I had informal discussions or exchanged information.	1.97	1.22	1.34	1.31
2. I formally instructed or advised people on how to do something.	1.38	0.78	1.10	1.31
3. I directed or ordered people to take an action.	1.41	0.84	1.11	1.28
4. I led or supervised non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.31	0.80	0.93	1.01
5. I tried to persuade individuals or groups to do something or take a different point of view.	1.38	0.78	1.07	1.21
6. I analyzed the actions and/or intent of individuals or groups.	1.82	1.27	1.30	1.24
7. I interpreted events from the perspective of non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.58	1.07	1.30	1.40
8. I developed short-term operational plans that impacted or considered non-U.S individuals or groups.	1.58	1.07	1.21	1.34
9. I developed procedures, protocols or long-term plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. people or groups.	1.44	0.89	1.21	1.32
10. I developed plans in collaboration with others.	1.51	0.91	1.09	1.18
11. I attempted to rapidly build rapport with other people or groups.	1.76	1.14	1.37	1.40
12. I attempted to build long-term relationships with individuals or groups.	1.52	1.00	1.29	1.35
13. I had arguments or other conflicts with non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.18	0.46	0.96	1.01
14. I experienced security threats from non-U.S. individuals or groups.	1.20	0.58	1.37	1.40

Table 7

Comparison of Interactions with Different Groups

	Frequency			Importance		
	M	*SD*	*a*	*M*	*SD*	*a*
Host Nation Civilians	2.54	1.38	.96	2.56	1.33	.95
Foreign Military	2.61*	1.25	.97	2.82*	1.43	.96
Host Nation Government Personnel	2.05	1.14	.97	2.09	1.41	.97
Foreign Contractors	2.06*	1.00	.95	1.95*	1.32	.96
Non-Government Organizations	1.51	0.71	.94	1.14	1.02	.96

* Indicates that the mean differs significantly from the ones below it at $p < .001$.

Behaviors and activities supporting mission performance. Table 8 lists all of the items from the portion of the questionnaire addressing behaviors and activities supporting mission performance in a socio-cultural context. All 53 items received mean ratings above 3 (*Some importance*), and 20 items received mean ratings of 4 (*Important*) or higher. The top ten rated items appear in bold and italics. These items include aspects of leadership, such as maintaining awareness of and conveying commander's intent, and interpersonal interactions, including working with interpreters, establishing rapport, and building relationships. Top-rated items also included understanding and anticipating the impact of the unit's actions on the local population.

"Interpret the meaning of cultural artifacts" and "Reduce empathic responding under stressful circumstances" received the lowest ratings ($M = 3.09$ and 3.27, respectively). Some participants explained in the focus group discussion that information about artifacts, gestures, and norms could be obtained from interpreters and was therefore less critical.

The current sample was too small to use factor analysis as a data reduction method to determine whether the 53 behaviors might be summarized by a smaller set of dimensions. However, the behaviors seemed to fall into one of several categories: (1) Understanding the socio-cultural context; (2) Interacting in that context; (3) Shaping the operating environment; and (4) Monitoring and managing ones' own emotions, reactions, and behavior. Reliabilities for these dimensions were good, with Cronbach's alphas of .95 for Understanding, .92 for Interacting, .96 for Shaping, and .89 for Managing Self.

Table 8
Ratings for Behaviors Supporting Mission Performance

	M	SD
1. Identify signs of cultural stress in self and subordinates.	4.11	0.98
2. Monitor and manage emotional state.	3.98	1.11
3. Engage in coping practices that substitute for practices used at home.	3.44	1.05
4. Reduce empathic responding under stressful circumstances.	3.27	1.05
5. Recognize when using own cultural lens and biases.	4.09	0.99
6. Seek feedback on own performance.	4.05	0.92
7. Provide feedback to others or engage in After Action Review when operational tempo allows.	4.04	1.00
8. Identify gaps in cultural knowledge and skills.	4.00	0.95
9. Maintain awareness of larger mission and commander's intent.	**4.49**	**0.74**
10. Communicate larger mission and commander's intent to subordinates.	**4.37**	**0.88**
11. Display tact and respect for local population when observed by subordinates.	**4.30**	**0.84**
12. Identify and seek out sources of socio-cultural information.	3.79	0.92
13. Request explanations for behavior from trusted local nationals, interpreters, and/or cultural advisors.	4.04	1.00
14. Interpret behavior of individuals and groups in area of responsibility according to their socio-cultural context.	3.74	0.97
15. Interpret meaning of cultural artifacts.	3.09	1.21
16. Compare U.S. perspectives and interpretations to local interpretations.	3.70	0.87
17. Suspend judgment; refrain from making immediate and/or ethnocentric attributions for and conclusions about behavior.	3.72	1.01
18. Update cultural knowledge in response to new information.	3.82	0.93
19. Observe reaction of local population for impact of unit's actions.	**4.33**	**0.97**
20. Interpret verbal and nonverbal cues.	4.14	1.04
21. Analyze impact of historical, cultural, economic and political factors on current events in AOR.	4.02	0.92
22. Convey to subordinates the relevance of intercultural interactions to the mission; reinforce cultural lessons from training and previous operations.	3.89	0.96
23. Apply cultural knowledge.	3.91	0.91
24. Incorporate socio-cultural factors into planning.	3.70	1.03

Table 8 (continued)

	M	*SD*
25. Anticipate likely 2nd and 3rd order effects of actions on local population.	***4.28***	***0.96***
26. Determine if and when to adapt tactics to the local culture.	3.91	1.01
27. Adjust communication behavior to fit local norms.	3.65	1.03
28. Use greetings, phrases in the local language.	3.88	1.09
29. Use simple gestures common to the local culture.	3.86	1.08
30. Avoid local taboos and American idioms/gestures.	3.68	1.14
31. Use active listening when interacting with local population or third-country nationals.	3.77	0.98
32. Communicate through an interpreter.	***4.33***	***1.01***
33. Build rapport in interpersonal interactions.	***4.18***	***1.02***
34. Demonstrate consideration and respect.	***4.32***	***1.04***
35. Initiate interactions with local population.	3.79	1.13
36. Display empathy in appropriate contexts.	3.47	1.09
37. Build and maintain relationships with critical individuals and organizations.	***4.19***	***0.99***
38. Apply knowledge of power and social structure to identify influential parties.	3.88	1.09
39. Apply knowledge of social dynamics like gift giving and reciprocity, self-disclosure, honor and face.	3.84	1.03
40. Manage interpersonal and inter-group conflict.	3.74	0.97
41. Maintain awareness of local perceptions and stereotypes about U.S. military.	3.96	1.05
42. Refrain from making or implying promises that are beyond own unit's authority and resources to keep.	***4.40***	***1.02***
43. Detect manipulation and deception in interpersonal interactions with locals.	4.14	0.95
44. Manage perceptions about U.S. personnel and operations in AOR.	3.93	0.98
45. Identify opportunities to enhance host nationals' understanding of U.S. culture.	3.40	1.16
46. Build consensus among parties from different countries and cultures.	3.47	1.10
47. Identify common interests among different parties.	3.49	1.04
48. Communicate common goals and values with members of other cultures.	3.79	1.08
49. Identify and leverage opportunities for indirect influence.	3.82	1.04
50. Incorporate cultural values, beliefs, and norms in influence tactics.	3.67	0.99

Table 8 (continued)	*M*	*SD*
51. Use alternate influence approach when initial tactics are unsuccessful.	3.70	1.07
52. Manage and resolve conflict.	4.04	1.05
53. Conduct bilateral negotiations with local leaders.	3.81	1.19

Combat versus non-combat roles. In focus group discussions, an apparent difference emerged between the experiences in combat roles and combat support or sustainment roles. To test the questionnaire responses for these differences, participants were divided into combat (Armor, Field Artillery, Infantry, Combat Engineer) or non-combat roles (Medical Services, Military Police, Chemical, Ordnance, Transportation, Quartermaster, other Engineer) according to their reported branch.

Participants in combat branches reported significantly higher frequency-importance composite ratings than did those in non-combat branches for contact with host nation civilians $(t(67) = 4.45, p = .001)$, foreign military $(t(66) = 5.25, p < .001)$, and foreign contractors $(t(65) = 2.25, p = .028)$. Encounters with host nation government personnel showed a marginally significant difference, $(t(66) = 1.83, p = .07)$. There was no difference for encounters with non-government organizations. Mean ratings are depicted in Figure 1. The same differences emerged when examining the frequency and importance composites separately.
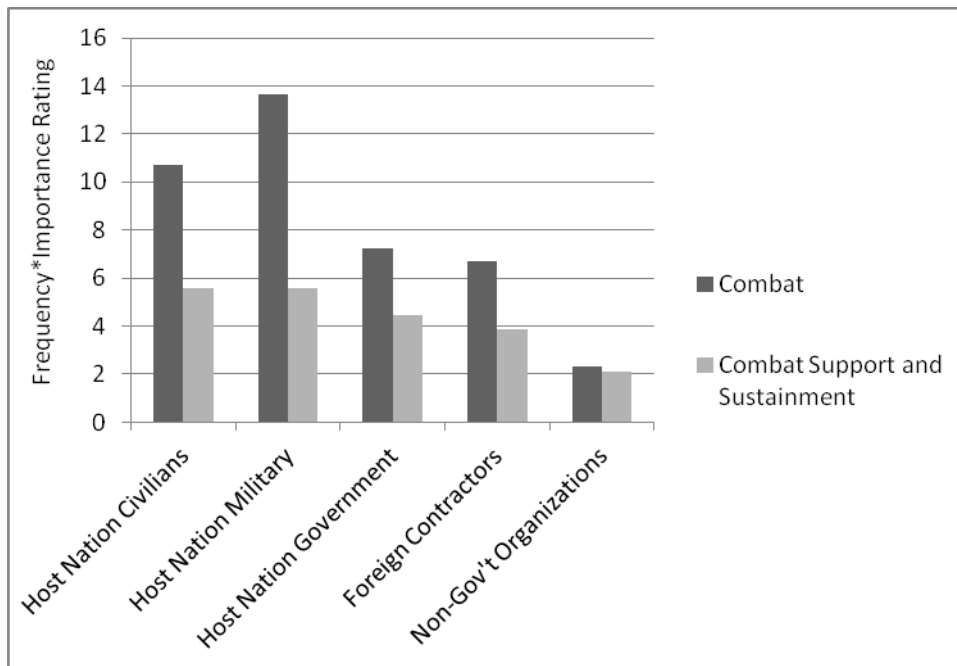

Figure 1. Comparison of intercultural encounters for combat versus non-combat roles.

Although differences emerged in the frequency and importance of different types of intercultural encounters, participants from combat branches did not differ in their perceptions of how important various behaviors were to supporting mission performance. A comparison of the behaviors rated by participants from combat and non-combat branches revealed a significant difference on only a single item, "Seek feedback on own performance," ($t(54) = 2.12$, $p = .04$). Participants from combat branches gave that item higher importance ratings, $M = 4.38$ ($SD = .67$) versus 3.86 ($SD = 1.00$).

In general, although the mean ratings were similar, responses from participants in non-combat branches tended to show more variability, with higher standard deviations for most items, suggesting that perhaps officers in combat roles had more similarity in their views of what behaviors would support mission performance in a socio-cultural context. A greater level of agreement among combat officers may be due to their higher levels of interaction with and consideration of the host nation culture.

Qualitative analysis. Following the administration of the cultural encounter and competencies questionnaire, officers participated in focus group sessions regarding cultural aspects of their deployment experiences. Officers answered questions on their role during the deployment; their interactions with interpreters, local populations, and foreign militaries; and the language and culture training they received pre-commissioning and pre-deployment. Participants also provided input on improving language and culture training.

Focus group data were content analyzed for key themes across groups. Participants typically interacted with host nation security forces and host nation civilians, as well as third-country security forces, host nation and third-country contractors, and displaced populations. Results indicated a number of common challenges during participants' deployment experiences, including unexpected deployment roles or locations, issues of trust when working with host nation or third-country security forces, cultural differences (particularly with regard to time orientation and work ethic), and leadership challenges. Working with interpreters and gender considerations were also salient topics.

Unexpected deployment roles or locations. Many participants indicated that the role they assumed on deployment was one for which they were not specifically trained. A number were unaware they would assume a role outside their branch or area of concentration until they arrived in theater. Although participants represented a variety of branches, many participants assumed an advisor role when deployed (e.g., Police Transition Teams, Military Transition Teams, Embedded Training Teams, and Provincial Reconstruction Teams). This role often differed from the officers' specialization, as noted by a junior officer who had been "trained to fight and conduct raids," yet was a "statesman" when deployed. Some of these unexpected or shifting deployment roles included:

- Establishing relationships and working with political leaders (e.g., sheiks, mayors, governors);
- Training host nation police or military (e.g., Iraqi Army, Afghanistan National Army);
- Conducting security operations, Quick Reaction Force (e.g., convoy, prison, election, and checkpoint security);

- Conducting information operations (e.g., working with Afghans to develop culturally sound communications);
- Managing logistics operations, coordinating with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs);
- Contracting and budgeting; and
- Gathering military intelligence (e.g., investigating detainee abuse).

Some participants also indicated that the location to which their unit was assigned had changed on arriving in the region. In some cases, this change in assignment meant that their pre-deployment culture or language training was of limited use. For example, officers working with the Kurds in northern Iraq reported having no need for the Arabic phrases they had learned in pre-deployment.

Trust. Many participants reported working closely with or being embedded with host nationals (e.g., interpreters, Iraqi police, Afghanistan National Army). As such, trust was critical to the success of the mission and to Soldiers' safety. This was particularly the case when working with interpreters, given that they were oftentimes viewed as the conduit for navigating and understanding the culture.

The absence of trust was often due to actual or suspected threats to Soldiers' safety. Participants recounted instances in which interpreters listened to specific radio frequencies even after being told not to. One interpreter was thought to have called in mortar rounds to the Forward Operating Base (FOB). A considerable number of participants reported being unsure whether the host nationals with whom they were working were insurgents or were aiding insurgents. One participant recounted an incident in which a bridge that was supposed to be protected by a foreign military was blown up by insurgents; the foreign military had been bribed to turn a "blind eye" to insurgent activity.

Trust also emerged as an issue with third-country militaries, in terms of their perceived lack of tactical training and technical know-how. Due to their lack of knowledge or skill in particular areas (e.g., pulling security), these militaries were often viewed to be more of a hazard than an asset to the mission. According to one participant, some third-country militaries "made the Iraqi Army seem easy to work with."

Even when due to legitimate security concerns, some participants reported this lack of trust of foreign individuals to be an obstacle in accomplishing their missions, and, in some cases, to carry over into their personal interactions with U.S. forces and civilians, causing them to question people's motivations.

Despite these challenges, trust was acknowledged to be a reciprocal process and participants noted that different approaches were needed by U.S. personnel to establish relationships of trust with host nationals. They recognized a need to demonstrate trust and trustworthiness. Playing sports with different ethnic groups on the FOB, inviting host nation security forces onto the FOB to dine with U.S. personnel, and making only commitments that could realistically be fulfilled were mentioned as means used to build or enhance trust.

Cultural differences in time orientation and work ethic. Participants reported being challenged by the lack of motivation and discipline of many of the host nationals. Participants complained that host nation security forces would often arrive hours late or not come to work, come unprepared for missions (e.g., no food, water, or gas), keep supplies for themselves or their families instead of using them on missions or distributing them to the general population, and attempt to leave work early. One officer mentioned an interpreter who continually tried to leave the unit during work to go on dates with local women. Another noted that host nation military personnel would try to leave training halfway through the work day and had to be hit with a stick by their host nation commander as a means of forcing them to stay.

Although some of the behaviors of local nationals could be explained through cultural differences (e.g., differing perceptions of time, keeping supplies to support one's family), these instances were very frustrating for officers operating with limited time and resources, and participants tended to explain these behaviors in terms of laziness and dishonesty. Participants often indicated that they felt there was little they could do to hold individuals accountable for their poor performance or a perceived lack of motivation, or to encourage the Iraqi government to support its own security forces.

Some frustrations reflected the need to influence host nationals outside Soldiers' chain of command who did not share the U.S. officers' values or work ethic. Many tried to influence the police chiefs or military commanders to instill discipline in their units. Others refused to give in to demands for supplies in an effort to help the host nation security forces become more self-sufficient. Many simply coped with these challenges by adjusting their expectations to match the practices and capabilities of the host nation personnel.

Other cultural differences frequently mentioned were differences in personal hygiene practices and proxemics (i.e., personal space). Though challenging, these differences seemed not to impact the mission directly.

Leadership challenges. Participants were asked whether their leaders highlighted the importance of the cultural-context of their missions. Results indicated that most leaders emphasized the cultural component of the mission, although participants were concerned that enlisted leaders (e.g., NCOs) did not share this perspective. Many NCOs had previously served in Iraq from 2003-2005 when U.S. strategy was markedly different than the subsequent counterinsurgency (COIN) approach. The impact of previous training focusing on kinetic warfare coupled with former deployment experiences (e.g., injuries or death of fellow Soldiers) negatively influenced some NCO attitudes towards the local population. Officers were concerned that these attitudes would permeate to the rest of the team and potentially jeopardize mission success.

Gender considerations. Although less than 15% of the sample was female, the female participants reported some unique challenges and opportunities as a function of their gender. Female participants had varied experiences with respect to how they were perceived and treated. In some situations, female Soldiers were disregarded solely based on their gender and host nationals would communicate only with male Soldiers. Elders were often unsure how to interact with the female Soldiers. Some female officers reported acting through a male officer or NCO in

Charge (NCOIC) as a proxy. Conversely, some of the female participants reported being treated as equals to their male counterparts, and reported gender not being a salient part of interactions in locations where female Soldiers were no longer a novelty.

In certain instances, being a female greatly benefited the unit. Sometimes female officers were able to communicate with local women—an option not available to men given the cultural norms. In one instance, a female platoon leader replaced a male Soldier who, for months, had had trouble getting intelligence on nearby improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Within a few visits, the Iraqis told this female platoon leader the whereabouts of insurgents and where IEDs were placed. In this case, being female was at least in part a benefit to the team because the police chief was a "huge womanizer."

Working with interpreters. Many participants reported extensive interactions with interpreters, often relying heavily on the interpreter as a means of learning the culture. As noted by one junior officer, "Cultural awareness training . . . is a snapshot—it doesn't even touch on the basics of what's going on in town, who's who . . . the interpreter is crucial to mission success." Interpreters who could be trusted were treated as members of the unit. Many of them had worked with the U.S. armed forces for years and were considered trustworthy, reliable, and dedicated; such interpreters regularly put their lives at risk to do their jobs.

However, interpreters were often not available to sustainment personnel, and these officers had to improvise. They reported having to communicate through group members who spoke the best English, or using nonverbal means of communication (e.g., using a laser pointer to indicate directions to contractors moving supplies on a FOB).

Some participants noted gaps in competence when working with interpreters. Working with multiple interpreters before finding one who was sufficiently competent was common. Some could not speak English well enough, and some did not know the local dialect or language needed for the deployment area. Interpreters perceived as most valuable were able to establish relationships with the local population, convey culturally appropriate emotions and gestures, provide accurate credibility assessments based on cultural cues, and demonstrate commitment to the mission.

Officers noted that having several interpreters available with differing capabilities was ideal. For example, a local host national could best provide access to the community and important cultural details, whereas a U.S.-based interpreter was more likely to have a security clearance and sometimes better reading skills, but weaker access to the community.

Common challenges that participants reported in working with interpreters included a general shortage of competent interpreters and ethnic differences between interpreters and the individuals with whom officers needed to communicate. The security threats to interpreters were also an ongoing problem. In addition, some participants reported that young interpreters were less effective because the local population did not respect them as much as older interpreters.

Participants' perceptions of education and training. Participants were asked to describe any culture-related education they received in pre-commissioning, as well as any cultural

training received pre-deployment. In addition, recommendations for training improvements were solicited and participants who had been commissioned through ROTC volunteered their perceptions of the program. Findings indicated that the type of culture-related education received during pre-commissioning and culture training received pre-deployment varied by Soldier and across units, although there were some consistencies regarding what type of training was perceived as most helpful.

Pre-commissioning. Participants reported little culture-related education or training during pre-commissioning. Any culturally-relevant instruction received was typically a small fraction of their larger academic curriculum (e.g., psychology, Middle East studies, and international relations classes). Suggestions for improving cultural education during pre-commissioning included encouraging or requiring culture-relevant courses (e.g., influence and persuasion, sociology) and also providing more training on how to effectively lead teams.

Aside from the cultural issues, some officers reported that they felt they were unprepared for their role as platoon leader when deployed (due to training in the Leader Development and Assessment Course that emphasized the squad level). A few participants mentioned that they would have benefited from learning basic management, computer, and presentation skills. A more extensive list of participants' recommendations for pre-commissioning is provided in Table 9.

Table 9
Pre-Commissioning Education and Training Reported and Recommended

Relevant Pre-Commissioning Education Reported	Pre-Commissioning Training and Education Recommended
• Courses on Middle Eastern studies, Arab culture • COIN-focused classes • Anthropology courses • International relations, negotiations courses • Psychology courses	• Provide more rigorous military science courses • Encourage or require relevant courses in sociology, international relations, psychology, (e.g., influence/persuasion, body language), geography • Increase focus on conducting operations (rather than land navigation) • Provide internship opportunities at the U.S. State Department to help develop skills for interacting with foreign militaries • Increase training regarding platoon-level leadership • Increase training on how to work with platoon SGTs (e.g., how to lead)

Other relevant education and training. With respect to pre-deployment culture training, many officers reported receiving training on cultural norms of which they were already aware, or received smart cards with that information. Some participants noted that lecture-style country orientations were useful when taught by someone from the country; they appreciated hearing the

perspective of a member of the target culture. However, several participants said they felt that cultural norms could be easily learned early during a deployment, particularly if officers had interpreters available.

Of other pre-deployment training received, interpreter, key leader engagement, and negotiation exercises at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) and National Training Center (NTC) were thought to be most beneficial. Not everyone had the opportunity to complete this kind of training. Some participants did not receive any one-on-one engagement training, and many sustainment personnel who attached to a unit did not attend JRTC or NTC at all unless the unit specifically requested it.

Briefings from Human Terrain Teams (HTT) or Soldiers recently returning from deployment were also perceived as very helpful as they were tailored to the region in which the Soldier would be deployed. Table 10 provides a summary of pre-deployment culture training as well as a number of recommendations for improvements.

Table 10
Culture Training and Education Reported and Recommended

Culture Training/Education Reported	Culture Training/Education Recommended
• Writing a report on different groups in the deployment area (as part of a PME course) • 3-month training course at Fort Riley for Military Transition Teams • Culture-specific training (e.g., manuals, smart cards/books, lecture, briefings) • Simulation exercises at Command Outposts (COPs) on Fort Campbell • JRTC (e.g., interpreter exercises, key leader engagements, entry tactics) • NTC (e.g., multiple mock negotiations) • Briefing from Human Terrain Team just returning from the deployment area • Briefings from Soldiers just returning from the deployment area • During deployment, learning through an interpreter	• Provide cultural training 6 months pre-deployment • Increase conflict-management exercises at JRTC/NTC • Provide manuals with in-depth descriptions of the country's history, religion, population, topography, politics, economy • Conduct information exchanges with human intelligence (HUMINT) and psychological operations (PSYOPS) teams for a greater cultural understanding • Increase civil affairs training (e.g., developing plans, working effectively with the local population, gathering information) • Provide information on insurgent funding and networks • Incorporate COIN-focused classes into military schools • Increase training related to military operations in urban environments • Create a senior Individual Readiness Training course geared more towards officers rather than enlisted personnel

In general, participants reported wanting more culture training on conflict management, influence and persuasion, and basic management and leadership skills. The need for increased

leadership training echoes pre-commissioning training recommendations. As noted by one participant, "In BOLC, every mission was platoon level and this isn't necessarily what happens; platoon leaders work with squad-level leaders; more training is needed with the unit."

Participants also reported wanting more specific information (e.g., manuals, briefings) on the area to which they are deploying; country-level training was deemed unhelpful when not directly relevant to the area of deployment. However, some participants noted the difficulty in obtaining this level of granularity in pre-deployment, as their battlespace sometimes shifted multiple times from pre-deployment to their arrival in the region. Participants differed in their views of the optimal time to provide this material (a few months prior to deployment versus upon arrival in the region).

Participants also recommended increased collaboration with Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) teams as a useful resource for building cross-cultural competence in garrison. Other recommendations included greater overlap and coordination with existing teams during Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority (RIPTOA) and use of resources such as the Center for Army Lessons Learned, whose products participants noted were improving.

Finally, participants recommended a number of books they found beneficial during their deployment experience. Several noted that commanders' reading lists were helpful and that this reading was a reasonable expectation of officers (although not for enlisted). Some mentioned the following should be mandatory reading for personnel about to deploy:

- *The Arab Mind,* by Raphael Patai;
- *A History of Iraq,* by Charles Tripp;
- *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, by John Nagl; and
- *Invisible Nation,* by Quil Lawrence.

Language training. Most participants noted that trying to speak the host nation language, even in a rudimentary manner, helped build credibility and demonstrated respect. Although participants indicated that they wished they knew more of the language, most said they felt it was impractical to achieve conversational proficiency given time constraints and uncertainty about future deployment locations and languages. For the select few who learned Arabic and were deployed to the Middle East, some were unable to use their language skills because they were working mainly with Kurds.

There was little endorsement of taking foreign language courses in pre-commissioning. Participants expressed concern about the potential impact on one's grade point average (GPA), as GPA was perceived to be a major factor in branch selection. They also reported a belief that taking two semesters of a foreign language in college would not produce a useful level of proficiency.

A number of officers suggested that the content and depth of language training should coincide with one's role, as some had little or no need for foreign language on their deployment.

As one Soldier stated, "Language training is not critical for everyone. I would not prioritize language training when it comes to effectiveness on the battlefield."

Most officers did not receive extensive language training pre-deployment (see Table 11 for a full list of training reported). Some officers participated in language classes but overall did not find these helpful given their unstructured and redundant nature. Many officers indicated that the most effective means of learning the language was through their interpreter. Others suggested assigning a 'phrase of the day' or including more everyday terminology during deployment.

Some participants reported they felt strongly that language translation tools should not be used in theater. Those who had tried using visual language translator cards (e.g., Kwikpoint, 2006) reported that these tools undermined their credibility with the Iraqis. One officer noted that it caused his "wasta meter" to go down and believed that using the translation cards was less effective than using no Arabic at all.

Table 11
Language Training Reported and Recommended

Language Training Reported	Language Training Recommended
• Foreign languages classes in Spanish, German, French, Arabic (pre-commissioning) -The majority of officers who took Arabic did not have a chance to practice and/or did not take enough to become proficient • Abbreviated course at Defense Language Institute • Language translation cards	• Practice with interpreter • Assign a 'phrase a day' on deployment • Tailor language training to branch • Ensure that language training is structured, organized • Teach everyday phrases in addition to tactical phrases • Teach language that coincides with where Soldiers are stationed

Delivery of culture training and education. Some participants expressed strong views that culture and foreign language training should not be conducted via distance learning during officers' personal time. Although a few participants expressed willingness to use leisure time to study language and culture, and some had been using Rosetta Stone®, most had very negative views about the Army requiring or expecting them to use off-duty time for culture or language study. Some reported a belief that such an approach would convey that the Army really does not prioritize culture. Others (particularly those in medical services) reported that they were often working 14-16 hours a day and could not take on more training. Others simply expressed a desire to spend their leisure time with family without the intrusion of additional training obligations.

Participants suggested two ways that distance learning might be an effective approach. In general, participants endorsed the idea of providing incentives for learning cultures and

languages, with some expressing interest in regional studies incentive pay analogous to the Foreign Language Proficiency Pay program. This approach would reward those with the interest and aptitude without making a certain level of achievement mandatory. A second possibility that participants found acceptable was mandatory cultural distance learning where study occurs as part of the duty day, though they were not optimistic about commanders making time available for such activities.

As an alternative to officers becoming more proficient themselves, many participants perceived a need for larger numbers of language and culture specialists available not only at higher echelons, but also at the small-unit level. One suggestion was to include a culture specialist in the S2. Another suggestion was for the Army to expand foreign language specialists into additional MOS.

Limitations and Conclusions

The sample was selected based on availability of personnel with recent deployment experience from several different branches. To include a qualitative discussion component, we opted not to conduct a survey on a sample that might have been broader and more representative. Time and other practical constraints also limited the sample size, and, as a result, some branches were omitted, such as military intelligence and signal corps.

Participants reported that they performed roles on deployment that were not typical for their branch, or for which they had not trained. The extent to which this pattern will continue in the future is uncertain. Although the sample characteristics certainly limit the findings as a representation of officers' deployment experiences, they did provide a useful snapshot of the variability in officers' experiences due to differing roles and missions.

One limitation of the questionnaire itself was that the cultural encounters portion did not distinguish between contact with host nation military and other foreign military, such as coalition partners. From focus group discussions, it was clear that participants' experiences in Iraq involved primarily the host nation military, but this item would need to be revised to make that distinction in any future data collections.

Other limitations include the sample's deployment experiences in terms of location and the phase of operations. Participants in the present study had primarily deployed to Iraq in support of Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) operations. Thus, their responses may reflect concerns relevant to the particular phase of the transition in Iraq that do not generalize to other phases, such as the high level of importance ascribed to refraining from making promises or commitments that the unit may have difficulty keeping. Participants reported many anecdotes about Iraqi security or police forces requesting logistical support from U.S. units, which sometimes presented challenges to the officers.

The location and specific cultures are also important considerations. The particular cultural differences that participants discussed may not generalize to other countries; officers will likely encounter different cultural norms and values elsewhere that present a different set of challenges. We attempted to address this issue in developing the competencies and learning

objectives by avoiding highly specific references to certain cultures, religious groups, or countries. As we have argued elsewhere (Abbe & Halpin, 2010), professional military education (PME) should provide the foundation for the agility to adapt to differing cultural environments; thus, PME should focus on learning outcomes that will transfer to any foreign culture and should incorporate regional and foreign language learning to support application and transfer.

Because the participants were selected primarily based on timing and availability rather than a high level of engagement with other cultures, it is notable that all of the behavior items on the questionnaire were perceived as having some importance to the participants' missions. These responses indicate that officers in the general-purpose force perceive socio-cultural issues as directly relevant to their roles and recognize the benefits of applying socio-cultural knowledge and skills in their missions.

Cultural Competencies

Based on the questionnaire and qualitative data, a draft competency framework was developed to describe the behaviors desired by junior officers in operations with a multi-cultural context (see Table 12). This framework was also informed by the Army Universal Task List (FM 7-15), the Army Learning Concept for 2015 (U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2010), and the Warrior Task and Battle Drill Critical Individual Supporting Tasks for Initial Military Training. Additionally, we identified four categories of competencies that describe what a new officer should be able to do with regard to the socio-cultural aspect of operations. These four categories were based on themes that emerged through questionnaire responses and the focus group sessions:

(1) Understand the socio-cultural context of operations;
(2) Interact;
(3) Shape the operating environment; and
(4) Manage self in a culturally unfamiliar setting.

Three of the competency categories (1 through 3 above) generally correspond with the ACFLS competency categories of impact of culture on military operations, communication, and influence. These categories are also aligned with the Warrior Tasks in Initial Military Training (IMT). The IMT task "Adapt to a changing operational environment" includes a self-awareness component ("See yourself culturally"), as well as cognitive ("Learn and understand the culture of other societies where you are deployed or assigned") and behavioral ("Perform in operational environment effectively") components.

The proposed set of competencies does not distinguish between culture-general and language, regional, or culture-specific capabilities because the competencies are always enacted in a particular cultural context. Typically, regional, foreign language, and culture-general capabilities will be used in conjunction. The culture-general versus culture-specific distinction is more useful in specifying learning domains for training and education; thus, this distinction appears in the learning objectives but not in the competency framework. We have also included some supporting attributes to link the competencies with previous research on cross-cultural competence (Abbe, Gulick, & Herman, 2007; McCloskey, Behymer, Ross, & Abbe, 2010).

Although initial results suggest that most of the competencies will apply to both the platoon and company levels of leadership, we have not yet obtained enough data to confirm this and cannot yet determine where cultural performance demands on LTs and CPTs may differ. CPTs may have a greater need for relationship building and influence than do LTs, but this hypothesis will need to be tested in a larger sample.

The framework outlined here does not explicitly distinguish leader competencies from cultural competencies; instead we have included some leader competencies related to socio-cultural issues as part of the competency "Shape the operating environment." For company-grade officers, the leadership aspect of shaping the operating environment largely occurs within the chain of command. For field-grade or flag officers, the leadership element may be quite different, possibly with more emphasis on influence outside the chain of command. The competency categories are intended to apply across other career levels, although the competencies themselves will likely be somewhat different at operational and strategic levels.

In addition to the issue of relevance to other levels of leadership, the generalizability or specificity of the competencies can also be considered with regard to branch of service. In a study of Air Force personnel, many of the same competencies were identified (Hardison et al., 2009). The Defense Language Office has attempted to identify common cultural learning objectives across services (McDonald, McGuire, Johnston, Selmeski, & Abbe, 2008) and continues to pursue the goal of a common set of competencies.

Table 12
Company-Grade Officer Cultural Competencies

Category	Competency	Additional Detail	Supporting Attributes
Understand socio-cultural context of operations	Identify and seek out sources of socio-cultural information.	Observe environment for relevant socio-cultural cues. Request explanations for events from interpreters, trusted host nationals, and/or cultural advisors. Interpret meaning of cultural artifacts.	Flexibility Perspective taking Cultural acuity Observational skills Willingness to engage Sensemaking Open-mindedness Cultural schema Regional/area-specific knowledge Language proficiency
	Interpret behavior of individuals and groups in AOR according to their socio-cultural context.	Compare U.S. interpretations to local interpretations. Suspend judgment; refrain from making immediate and/or ethnocentric attributions for behavior. Update cultural schema in response to new information.	
	Observe reaction of local population for impact of unit's actions.	Interpret verbal and nonverbal cues. Use available resources (e.g., interpreters).	
	Analyze impact of historical, cultural, economic, geographic, and political factors on current events in AOR.	Apply regional and cultural knowledge. Apply analytic techniques and frameworks. Consider impact of U.S. presence on political and social dynamics.	
Interact	Adjust communication behavior to fit local norms.	Use greetings, phrases in the local language. Use gestures common to local culture. Avoid local taboos and American idioms/gestures. Use active listening. Communicate through an interpreter.	Flexibility Willingness to engage Social initiative Perspective taking & empathy Non-ethnocentrism Self-awareness Self-monitoring Cultural schema Regional/area-specific knowledge Language proficiency
	Build rapport in interpersonal interactions.	Demonstrate consideration and respect. Initiate interactions (where security concerns allow). Display empathy in appropriate contexts.	
	Build and maintain relationships with critical individuals and organizations.	Apply knowledge of power and social structure to identify influential parties. Apply knowledge of social dynamics such as gift giving and reciprocity, self-disclosure, honor and face. Manage interpersonal and inter-group conflict.	
	Represent U.S. in a positive light.	Maintain ethical standards for behavior. Refrain from making or implying promises that are beyond own unit's authority and resources to keep.	
	Detect manipulation and deception in interpersonal interactions.	Interpret verbal and nonverbal cues. Apply socio-cultural knowledge and use socio-cultural information resources.	

Table 12 (continued)

Shape the operating environment	Manage perceptions about U.S. personnel and operations in AOR.	Maintain awareness of local perceptions and stereotypes and of U.S. military. Identify opportunities to shape host nationals' understanding of U.S. culture.	Flexibility Willingness to engage Social initiative Perspective taking & empathy Non-ethnocentrism Self-awareness Self-monitoring Cultural schema Regional/area-specific knowledge Language proficiency
	Build consensus.	Identify common interests among different parties. Communicate common goals and values.	
	Influence beyond the chain of command.	Identify and build relationships with local sources of influence. Incorporate cultural values, beliefs, and norms in influence tactics. Use alternate influence approach when initial tactics unsuccessful.	
	Manage and resolve conflict.	Conduct bilateral negotiations with local leaders. Manage interpersonal conflict with or among local population and/or third country nationals.	
	Incorporate socio-cultural factors into planning and decision making.	Anticipate likely 2nd and 3rd order effects of actions. Consider alternative COAs and their socio-cultural implications.	
	Lead.	Communicate intent to subordinates. Model cultural tolerance and culturally adaptable behavior for subordinates. Convey to subordinates the relevance of intercultural interactions to the mission; reinforce cultural lessons from training and previous operations.	
Manage self in a culturally unfamiliar setting	Manage stress.	Monitor and manage emotional state. Engage in coping practices where needed. Identify signs of cultural stress in self and subordinates. Reduce empathic responding under stressful circumstances.	Flexibility Emotion regulation Uncertainty tolerance Non-ethnocentrism Flexibility Self-monitoring Learning orientation
	Engage in continuous learning to support mission performance.	Identify gaps in cultural knowledge and skills. Recognize when using own cultural lens, biases.	
	Maintain awareness of larger mission and act in accordance with commander's intent.	Seek feedback. Engage in After Action Reviews when operational tempo allows.	

Revised Culture and Foreign Language Learning Objectives

The data reported in the previous sections provided one source of input to a revision of the culture and foreign language learning objectives for officers in Career Stage 1 (recruitment through initial military training) detailed in the ACFLS. Other input for these objectives included the Regional and Cultural Capabilities Assessment (RACCA) Working Group report (McDonald et al., 2008) and research conducted in developing the Cross-Cultural Assessment Tool (McCloskey et al., 2010).

The ACFLS career culture sub-components include two dimensions: foundations and competencies. *Foundations* include cross-cultural competence (culture fundamentals, self-awareness, skills), foreign language (foreign language proficiency and language tools), and regional competence. *Competencies* include communication skills, impact of culture on military operations, and influence. The *Foundations* represent learning domains that are critical to support performance as a junior officer, and the *Competencies* represent learning domains for the actions and skills that are directly used in job performance. These competencies from the ACFLS seem to overlap with the competency dimensions identified in our empirical research, with communication skills roughly equivalent to our Interaction dimension, impact of culture on military operations overlapping with Understanding, and influence equivalent to Shaping.

The ACFLS does not explicitly include the competency area of "Manage self in a culturally unfamiliar setting." However, this competency is addressed in the revised objectives for cultural self-awareness and skills, and is likely indirectly included in other programs, such as Comprehensive Soldier Fitness.

The revised learning objectives are organized into these two dimensions. For the purposes of this revision, the major culture and foreign language objectives from the ACFLS (2009) were viewed as the overarching learning goals:

Culture Major Objectives:

- Build a foundation in cross-cultural competence that ensures effectiveness in basic cross-cultural interactions at the platoon level.
- Begin to build a foundation in regional competence that ensures familiarity with knowledge, skills, and attributes required to operate effectively in a specific region or country.
- Develop culture knowledge, skills, and attributes to attain the cultural awareness level.

Foreign Language Major Objectives:

- Learn a limited set of vocabulary and phrases in a foreign language.
- Develop confidence in learning and applying language skills
- Become familiar with language tools/resources.
- Understand the value of foreign language capability as an important resource for the Army.

Learning Objectives

Using the major objectives as the superordinate goals and considering the data we obtained from company-grade officers with recent deployment experience, the learning objectives were revised in several ways. First, we added verbs to make the learning objectives more concrete and more readily incorporated into curriculum and instructional planning and design. We added some skills that were missing from the original list of learning objectives that had repeatedly emerged in interviews. In addition, we added some objectives to the competency domains that were omitted in the ACFLS, but were included in the RACCA report, and were consistent with the information obtained in our questionnaire and focus group data. Redundant items that appeared in multiple categories were then eliminated (e.g., characteristics that enable learning and adaptation to unfamiliar cultures appear under cultural self-awareness rather than fundamentals).

We further consolidated some objectives and expanded others to better reflect the relative emphasis that officers in our data collections placed on the different learning domains. For example, under 'Skills,' we added observational skills because observing the reaction of the local population was among the highest rated behaviors supporting mission performance. Interpreting nonverbal cues and the behavior of individuals and groups in one's AOR were also perceived as important, and the skills needed to make these interpretations accurately were not reflected in the original ACFLS objectives. We also reduced and consolidated some of the foreign language objectives to better address officers' perceptions about language reported in our empirical findings.

Other changes included some minor reorganization or reframing. For example, the distinction between cross-cultural competence and regional competence was removed from the competency areas, as culture-general and region-specific capabilities will be used in conjunction in any operational context. We also removed "apply that knowledge at the platoon level" for some learning objectives for which opportunities to apply this knowledge at the platoon level would be very limited during BOLC-A. For example, regional competence learning objectives will likely be met by available courses in the curriculum at a particular university; these courses may offer no opportunities for cadets to apply this knowledge to small-unit operations.

Due to course offerings typically available on various campuses, it may be easier to address the regional competence and foreign language objectives through an existing curriculum than to address the cross-cultural competence objectives. Regional and foreign language studies certainly can produce culture-general learning outcomes, but do not necessarily or automatically do so. Thus, it may be necessary to devote some instructional time in the military science courses to introduce the cross-cultural competence objectives or to make links with regional and foreign language learning.

Compared with the ACFLS learning objectives, this revision provides a smaller set of learning objectives that aims more specifically at the needs of company-grade officers. For comparison, Table 13 indicates the number of objectives in each category in the ACFLS versus the objectives proposed in this report. Table 14 lists the learning objectives themselves. It is important to note the distinction between competencies and learning objectives. While a

competency reflects something the officer needs to *do* on the job, a learning objective is something he/she needs to *learn* in order to do those things; the learning objectives are intended to be concrete ways to demonstrate mastery of an area in a controlled learning setting. While success at demonstrating the competencies could be affected by a variety of factors, mastery of the learning objectives increases the probability that an officer will demonstrate those competencies on deployment.

Table 13
Culture and Foreign Language Objectives by Category

	Number of Objectives	
	Original list	New list
Culture fundamentals	6	4
Cultural self-awareness	9	5
Culture skills	4	5
Regional competence	8	5
Foreign language	6	3
Foreign language tools	6	4
Impact of culture on military operations	7	5
Communication	6	4
Influence	5	3
Total:	57	38

Learning Levels for BOLC-A

The revised learning objectives are also organized with a distinction among three learning levels in BOLC-A. These levels are intended to be consistent with the levels already identified by Cadet Command. The first two levels apply to general-purpose forces. Level I is the *Culture Generalist* level and would apply to all cadets, in anticipation of preparing new officers in the general-purpose force. Level II is *Enhanced Culture Generalist*. This level would apply to a smaller proportion of cadets who have the interest and motivation to pursue additional foreign language and culture learning opportunities, including international immersion and/or study abroad. Cadets at this level should receive opportunities to acquire a *breadth* of culture and foreign language learning that not only provides capabilities for the junior officer role, but also prepares them for other future leadership roles.

Such learning opportunities should not be limited to foreign language and regional studies; future officers will need a more global orientation that may not be provided by a focus on a particular language, country, or region. These future officers would benefit from undergraduate courses with an international or culture-general emphasis. Examples include international negotiation or conflict resolution, intercultural communications, international politics, anthropology, or cross-cultural psychology. This global orientation will also help to develop a foundation for understanding diverse cultures, ethnicities, and parties within a region if the Army aligns units or officers with particular regions in the future.

Level III is *Novice Culture Specialist*, which prepares cadets for potential future specialist roles such as Foreign Area Officers, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, or Human Intelligence. In contrast to the breadth of Culture Generalists, cadets at this level should receive opportunities to acquire greater depth in culture and foreign language.

Some learning objectives are the same for all three levels. Other learning objectives differ, as differing learning opportunities will enable some cadets to achieve more expertise. For example, whereas Level I might aim for 'remembering' in Bloom's taxonomy (e.g., can the student recall or remember information?; Krathwohl & Anderson, 2001), Levels II and III might aim for understanding, application, or analysis (can the student explain ideas or concepts?).

Relative to ROTC and USMA, OCS has very limited time and resources to incorporate the culture and foreign language learning objectives. In addition, officer candidates may have learned some aspects of the foundations or competencies already in their prior service or training. As a result, it may be appropriate to focus more on the *Competency* learning domains in OCS than on the *Foundations*, as those domains involve the application of cultural learning to the platoon level. Of the *Foundations*, cultural self-awareness and skills are important at least to introduce. Candidates should be assessed to determine what knowledge and skills they bring to OCS so that limited time and resources can be directed to the objectives most critical for them.

BOLC-B

Some of the *Foundations* can be more easily addressed in BOLC-A, particularly foreign language and regional competence, due to the availability of course offerings at universities. BOLC-B (branch training) can then place relatively more emphasis on the *Competencies*, ensuring opportunities to apply the foundational knowledge and skills platoon leaders need for successful performance in their functions. BOLC-B can also effectively revisit the aspects of cross-cultural competence (culture fundamentals, cultural self-awareness, and skills) that the *Competencies* directly draw on. For example, using scenarios and exercises, BOLC-B can provide new officers with opportunities to demonstrate their flexibility to take multiple approaches in communicating with and influencing members of another culture.

As individuals move from the more traditional education structure of BOLC-A into their new role as officers, adult learning and instructional principles will be even more critical (Knowles, 1970; Merrill, 2002). Therefore, to be most effective, instruction addressing socio-cultural learning should be tailored for branch roles and functions. Officers will benefit from problem-centered learning that provides opportunities for application of the knowledge, skills, and competencies as they relate to their specific branch. Depending on the branch, Level I, II, or III objectives may be most appropriate, as our empirical research showed differences in the extent to which cultural competencies were used for different missions and functions. Tailoring socio-cultural objectives for different branch schools will also ensure that culture is viewed as integral to one's role as an officer, rather than something merely to comply with in training but ultimately ignore.

Table 14

Culture and Foreign Language Learning Objectives

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III
	Culture Generalist (All GPF)	**Culture Generalist – Enhanced**	**Novice Culture Specialist**
Culture and Foreign Language Foundations			
Culture Fundamentals			
Definitions of culture	Define culture; identify differing definitions of culture, including the US Army's.		
Major factors that form the basis of a culture	Recognize different domains (e.g., social structure), levels (national vs. organizational), and components (e.g., values, beliefs, behavior, and norms) of culture.		
How cultures differ	Recognize differences between and similarities of cultures in terms of the domains above.	Compare and contrast cultures in terms of the above (domains, levels and components).	
Cultural and intercultural dynamics	Identify and describe how cultures are learned, conditioned, or passed along; recognize some dynamics of intercultural contact.		
Cultural Self-Awareness			
Cultural diversity within the U.S.	Describe different American cultures (e.g., religion; ethnicity/race; sex/gender; social class; regional differences; etc.), including concept of organizational and military Service cultures (e.g., Army culture).		
Other cultures' perception of U.S. culture	Distinguish perceptions about U.S. culture by other cultures.		
Individual cultural identity	Identify aspects of one's own cultural identity and how they impact one's ability to interact with other cultures.		
Bias and cognitive dissonance	Identify the concepts of bias, stereotyping, and the impact of one's cultural identity on bias.		
Individual attributes that affect interaction with unfamiliar cultures	Recognize one's own individual attributes that may affect interaction with unfamiliar cultures (e.g., attitudes and social initiative, openness, empathy).		

Table 14 (continued)

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III
Skills			
Suspending judgment when interacting with people from another culture	Recognize when using one's own cultural lens; suspend judgment when interacting with people from another culture.		
Consider others' perspectives when interacting with people from another culture	Consider others' perspectives when interacting with people from another culture; demonstrate ability to use alternate cultural lenses when interpreting events.		
Observational skills	Identify and apply methods for detecting and interpreting cultural cues in the environment; identify the emotional content of social interactions from nonverbal cues.		
Skills for continuous learning	Identify techniques for acquiring socio-cultural information; list resources for cultural and regional information and training.		
Flexibility	Recognize multiple approaches to solving a problem; recognize that problem solving and decision making are culturally based.		
Regional Competence			
Major historical events of a specific region or country to include its legends and myths	Identify aspects of two or more domains for one region or country.	Identify aspects of two or more domains either for multiple regions or countries; compare and contrast the selected domains between two or more countries or regions.	Identify three or more domains for one country or region; analyze and relate different regional domains to each other.
Current and projected political structure and major political organizations/figures of a specific region or country			
The cultures of a specific region or country to include its linguistic and religious aspects			
Economic, financial, and legal systems of a specific region or country			

Table 14 (continued)

	LEVEL I	LEVEL II	LEVEL III
Geographic characteristics of a specific region or country to include significant geographic locations			

Foreign Language			
Language awareness	Recognize language, dialect, and writing system differences among populations; identify cultural differences in gesture meaning and use; describe the relationship between language and culture.		
Foreign language proficiency	Select/designate a language for study.	Gain elementary proficiency in a foreign language; recognize and use appropriate gestures associated with that language.	
Language resources to meet anticipated needs	Build individual language resources toolkit		

Language Tools			
Use of interpreter/translator personnel	Demonstrate how to use an interpreter/translator appropriately.		
Use, limitations, and appropriateness of automated language translation devices	Identify and describe the use and appropriateness of automated language translation devices; understand cultural differences that may limit utility of these devices.		
How to access and use language training resources (e.g., Field Support Guides and Language Survival Kits)	Identify available language training resources.		
Language learning strategies	Recognize some language learning strategies.		

Table 14 (continued)

Culture and Foreign Language Competencies			
	LEVEL I	**LEVEL II**	**LEVEL III**
Impact of Culture on Military Operations [Understand]			
Analytical tools that can aid in integrating cultural considerations into military plans (e.g., PMESII, ASCOPE, new Human Terrain Map System, CGSC/ILE Culture Worksheet, etc.)	Describe basic analytical tools that can aid in integrating cultural considerations into military plans; apply that knowledge at the platoon level.		
Points of friction between U.S. doctrine for military operations and broad cultural norms	Identify points of friction between U.S. doctrine for military operations and broad cultural norms.		
Culture factors that can or cannot be leveraged to influence an operation	Identify culture factors that can or cannot be leveraged to influence an operation; apply that knowledge at the platoon level.		
Application of culture considerations in the military planning process across the spectrum of conflict	Apply cultural considerations in the military planning process across the spectrum of conflict; apply that knowledge at the platoon level; influence its use throughout the unit (e.g., impact of local traditions, holidays, and celebrations).		
Capabilities of culture specialists (FAO, human terrain system teams, red teams, intelligence specialists, Special Forces, etc.)	Identify and describe the capabilities of culture specialists and how to employ them; apply that knowledge at the platoon level.		

Table 14 (continued)

Communication [Interact]		
Interpreting communication behavior	Describe cultural differences in communication styles (e.g., high context vs. low context cultures, use of proxemics); identify cultural differences and similarities in verbal and nonverbal cues; apply that knowledge when interacting with people from a specific region or country at the platoon level.	
Adapting own communication behavior	Demonstrate emerging ability to adjust communication style for different audiences; demonstrate active listening; apply to platoon level operations; demonstrate awareness of one's own behaviors and potential misinterpretations of those cues in other cultures.	
Building rapport with people from a different culture	Demonstrate ability to build rapport with people from a different culture; demonstrate appropriate use of disclosure, tact, respect; apply that knowledge at the platoon level.	
Build and maintain relationships with people from a different culture	Apply interpersonal skills in intercultural interactions	Apply interpersonal skills in intercultural interactions; demonstrate ability to build and maintain relationships of operational relevance at the platoon level.
Influence [Shape]		
Different forms of influence (e.g., leadership, social position, religious figures)	Recognize some of the principal sources and tactics of influence (e.g., leadership, social position, religious figures); contrast sources and tactics used in the U.S. with those of another culture.	
Cross-cultural conflict resolution	Understand and apply a limited number of negotiation and mediation techniques for cross-cultural situations and apply in operations at the platoon level.	Understand and apply a limited number of negotiation and mediation techniques for cross-cultural situations and apply in operations at the platoon level; Recognize how some of the major aspects of negotiation and persuasion, mediation and conflict resolution, leadership and influence are conducted or manifested in a specific region or country.
Group and team dynamics	Recognize cultural differences that may impact multicultural teams.	Recognize cultural differences that may impact multicultural teams; Identify methods for coordination, leadership, informal leadership for intercultural interactions at the platoon level.

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Appendix A
Cultural Encounter Questionnaire

We used the following questionnaire, combined with some demographic questions, to determine the degree of contact with other cultures during deployment and the importance of those encounters to respondents' missions. Responses were used to develop and revise the cultural competency framework.

Please use the following scale to best describe the <u>amount</u> of interaction you had with foreign populations during your most recent deployment.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Regularly	Daily or Almost Daily
1	2	3	4	5

	Host nation Civilians	Foreign military personnel	Host nation government personnel	Host nation or third country contractors	Non-government organizations (NGOs)
EXAMPLE: I had informal discussions or exchanged information.	*3*	*2*	*1*	*5*	*1*
1. I had informal discussions or exchanged information.					
2. I formally instructed or advised people on how to do something.					
3. I directed or ordered people to take an action.					
4. I led or supervised non-U.S. individuals or groups.					
5. I tried to persuade individuals or groups to do something or take a different point of view.					
6. I analyzed the actions and/or intent of individuals or groups.					
7. I interpreted events from the perspective of non-U.S. individuals or groups.					
8. I developed short-term operational plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. individuals or groups.					
9. I developed procedures, protocols or long-term plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. people or groups.					
10. I developed plans in collaboration with others.					
11. I attempted to rapidly build rapport with other people or groups.					
12. I attempted to build long-term relationships with individuals or groups.					
13. I had arguments or other conflicts with non-U.S. individuals or groups.					
14. I experienced security threats from non-U.S. individuals or groups.					

Now please describe the <u>importance to your mission</u> of the interactions you had with foreign populations during your most recent deployment.

Not at all important	Little importance	Some importance	Important	Absolutely Essential
1	2	3	4	5

	Host nation Civilians	Foreign military personnel	Host nation government personnel	Host nation or third country contractors	Non-government organizations (NGOs)
EXAMPLE: I had informal discussions or exchanged information.	*5*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*1*
1. I had informal discussions or exchanged information.					
2. I formally instructed or advised people on how to do something.					
3. I directed or ordered people to take an action.					
4. I led or supervised non-U.S. individuals or groups.					
5. I tried to persuade individuals or groups to do something or take a different point of view.					
6. I analyzed the actions and/or intent of individuals or groups.					
7. I interpreted events from the perspective of non-U.S. individuals or groups.					
8. I developed short-term operational plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. individuals or groups.					
9. I developed procedures, protocols or long-term plans that impacted or considered non-U.S. people or groups.					
10. I developed plans in collaboration with others.					
11. I attempted to rapidly build rapport with other people or groups.					
12. I attempted to build long-term relationships with individuals or groups.					
13. I had arguments or other conflicts with non-U.S. individuals or groups.					
14. I experienced security threats from non-U.S. individuals or groups.					